



Volume 4, Issue 10

Gray Davis, Governor  
Maria Contreras-Sweet, Secretary of Business, Transportation and Housing Agency  
Jeff Morales, Director

OCTOBER 2003

## Two Caltrans Heroes Receive State's Highest Honor

In a Sept. 11 commemorative ceremony, Governor Gray Davis presented two District 8 employees with the highest honor the State of California can bestow: the Medal of Valor for heroism far above and beyond the call of duty and service. Gary Ratliff and Terry Gillich's names will be added to the plaque on display in the Capitol, across the hall from the Governor's Office.

On July 7, 2001, Ratliff, a Landscape Leadworker, and Gillich, an Equipment Operator II, along with California Highway Patrol (CHP) Officers David Bradford and

Michael Kerr, and private citizen James Payne, formed a human chain in a daring rescue of five people.

In the midst of severe flash floods and thunderous skies, the victims – all relatives – were trapped in a quickly sinking pickup truck. "I felt water covering my feet and my ankles," said 16 year-old Natalie Shoemaker. "My cousin and brother started screaming and crying and I told them to calm down and I started praying."

When Gillich arrived at the scene, he saw that the pickup truck had been thrust by the swift current into a 30-degree angle. Reacting quickly, Gillich began easing his plow truck into the water to take a closer look. Just then, the door of the pickup swung open and 14 year-old Ryan Bird was waving his arms and screaming for help.



*Caltrans employees, Terry Gillich and Gary Ratliff, are joined by Director Jeff Morales and District 8 Director Anne Mayer, after receiving their Medal of Valor awards.*

During Gillich's first two futile attempts, the treacherous current forced the plow truck to slide sideways. The Toyota pickup, now leaning at a 45-degree angle, was out of reach. The rescuers, who had climbed into the back of the plow truck, discarded the rescue vehicle and quickly waded into the water. "We all knew what was about to happen if we hesitated for even a second," Gillich said.

Ryan and his grandfather, James Milliken, were the first to escape from the sinking vehicle. As the grandfather fell into the water, the current slammed him

against the undercarriage of the truck, now at a 90-degree angle. Totally exhausted and unable to continue on his own, the grandfather – recuperating from recent heart bypass surgery – was assisted out of the water by CHP Officer David Bradford.

Forging through the raging waters, other quick-thinking team members formed a human chain and held onto the Caltrans vehicle for support. Officer Bradford then re-entered the water, making it to the front grill of the Toyota truck and found a hard spot in the river bottom to brace himself. Water up to his chest, he firmly held the pickup against the current to keep it from overturning while the rest of the victims narrowly escaped, one-by-one.

Carrie Milliken, Ryan's grandmother, was the next to

*Caltrans Heroes*

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## DIRECTOR'S CORNER



Director Jeff Morales

## Heroes Make California a Better Place to Live

played on Caltrans changeable message signs (CMS) on the America's Missing Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) Alert system, Walters noticed the Bronco and wrote its license number into the dirt at his work site. He immediately alerted law enforcement authorities, who then were able to rescue the two girls and bring them home safely.

And a year ago, I had the honor of recognizing Brandi Means, an operator with District 8's Traffic Management Center. She took the initiative to post the descriptions statewide of the two girls and the white Ford on the CMSs, even though the procedure was not yet policy and her supervisor was not present.

Both of these employees stand out. They were willing to become involved because they knew that the girls' lives were at risk. As a result of these two heroes' quick and decisive efforts, the young women survived what might have become a far worse ordeal.

Others have followed in that tradition. Since the Governor directed the California Highway Patrol and Caltrans to work together, California has had 34 AMBER Alerts involving 44 victims. All of the victims have been safely recovered.

And in a ceremony in late August, 22 Caltrans employees from across the state won Governor's Employee Safety Awards. Many of the workers were recognized for making safety improvements that could save lives in the future.

Other Caltrans employees saved the lives of others who were in imminent danger.

For example, Caples Lake Maintenance employees Donald Jardine, Tom Lupton and John Kearns, Jr., were performing routine work on State Highway 88 when they noticed a woman who fell to the pavement. As a result of the three men's coordinated efforts, emergency rescue personnel were able to take the unconscious woman to the

hospital, where she was diagnosed as having a malignant brain tumor.

Larry Diaz, an equipment operator in District 7, prevented a potentially fatal accident by pulling his truck in front of an errant vehicle and shielding fellow employees at the site of a ramp closure. No one died that day.

Other Governor's Employee Safety Award winners helped in a variety of ways. One comforted a boy trapped in a car while emergency personnel were en route, another performed CPR on an accident victim. One equipment operator shielded a woman who was being attacked by an irate relative, and a maintenance worker in the Bay Area saved the life of a man who was attempting suicide.

They were all heroic acts, and went far beyond the normal duties of their everyday tasks.

Sometimes heroes are sitting, unrecognized, right next to us. Headquarters employees raised more than \$24,000 through the American Heart Association's recent Heart Walk. That sum bested last year's total. It was the third year in a row that Headquarters employees ranked first in fundraising among all participating state departments.

And several Caltrans employees are attempting to raise pledges, as well as public awareness, for the American Stroke Association. They are competing in the 2003 Honolulu Marathon in December.

Many of our employees are also raising funds for, and contributing to, the California State Employees Charitable Campaign (CSECC) for United Way.

All those mentioned above are heroes. Our appreciation and our admiration go out to each of them. By virtue of their selfless acts, they make California an incalculably better place to live.

Thank you.

There are many types of heroes. As I've mentioned in several recent columns, all Caltrans employees have risen above the ordinary in the last year by meeting the challenges that arose from the Department's recent financial situation.

Other heroes have gone far out of their way, even to the point of risking their lives, to help others. You will read about some of them in this issue of the CT News.

For example, Governor Gray Davis last month presented two District 8 employees with the Medal of Valor, the highest honor the state can bestow.

Gary Ratliff, a Landscape Lead Worker, and Terry Gillich, an Equipment Operator, won recognition for their heroism far above and beyond the call of duty and service. You can read about their heroic acts on the cover of this issue.

In August the Governor also paid tribute to Milton Walters, an equipment operator in District 9, who played a significant role last year in helping to identify the automobile and suspect involved in the kidnapping of two young women in Southern California.

Based on a description that was dis-



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Public Affairs Office  
1120 N Street, Room 1200  
Mail Stop 49  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 653-5456  
(916) 653-4086 (TTY) or CRS - 711





## Bridge Dedicated to Fallen Highway Maintenance Workers

In honor of Caltrans maintenance workers who have died while on duty, Governor Davis last month announced the dedication of the "Caltrans Maintenance Worker Memorial Bridge."

The renaming was made possible by Senate Concurrent Resolution 105, authored by Senator John Burton. The International Union Operating Engineers and the Caltrans family also supported the occurrence.

The former "Bryte Bend Bridge," on Interstate 80 in Sacramento and Yolo counties, was renamed in a poignant ceremony featuring Director Jeff Morales and the District 3 Caltrans Honor Guard. The Director said,

"Every time a driver goes over this bridge and notices the sign, 'Caltrans Maintenance Worker Memorial Bridge,' it is a chance to influence another worker's safety."

"Maintaining the California highway system is a difficult and dangerous job that goes on 24 hours a day," said Governor



*Caltrans Maintenance employees and a representative from the International Union Operating Engineers pose by the recently dedicated Caltrans Maintenance Worker Memorial Bridge.*

Davis. "This bridge honors the 158 Caltrans workers who have lost their lives while working on the 15,000-mile State Highway System."

Caltrans' No. 1 priority is the safety of its workforce and the traveling public. This memorial complements the Caltrans "Slow For The Cone Zone" campaign, which is credited with reducing collisions, deaths and injuries in construction work zones.

One key strategy of the campaign is to use billboards and radio commercials to target commuters while traveling in their car.

The statistics speak for themselves. Caltrans has not suffered a fatal accident since the inception of the pilot Cone Zone Campaign that began April 8, 2001, in Districts 3, 4, 5 and 10. During 2001, collisions in work zones declined by 16 percent and an additional 9 percent last year.

The pilot project had such great results that the Caltrans Worker's Memorial of 2003, held in Capitol Park on April 8, 2003, marked the kick-off for the statewide "Slow for the Cone Zone" campaign.

As you cross the new Caltrans Maintenance Worker Memorial Bridge, remember to honor our Caltrans family members who have died while on duty, and as you enter California highway construction sites, remember to slow for the cone zone.

## Caltrans Employees Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month

*By Xiomara Balladares  
Senior Right of Way Agent*

The tradition of celebrating Hispanic Heritage in September throughout Mexico, Central America and South America occurred in Sacramento when a group of the Department's employees held a successful event.

On Sept. 10, Caltrans employees gathered in the Capitol Auditorium to hear messages from Business, Transportation and Housing Agency Secretary Maria Contreras-Sweet, Caltrans Director Jeff Morales, and District 3 Director Jody Lonergan. The attendees represented the wide diversity and richness of the Department's staff.

From the mid 1500s through the early 1800s, Spain and Portugal colonized extensive territory in the



*Business, Transportation & Housing Agency Secretary Maria Contreras-Sweet with Xiomara Balladares, Caltrans Senior Right of Way Agent, at the Hispanic Heritage Month celebration in September.*

Americas. Later, Simon Bolivar planted the seed of "Libertad" (freedom), which spread rapidly throughout the area.

The spirit of liberty crossed the continent from the high mountains of Machu Picchu to the Amazon River in Brazil, Argentina and Chile. After South America gained its independence, patriotism crossed the Isthmus of Panama to Central America and Mexico, where the call of "Libertad" was proclaimed from the majestic pyramids of the old Mayan Empire.

After several decades of war and internal conflict, a number of countries gained their freedom. Eight of them - Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Chile and Brazil - gained

**Heritage**

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## DOT TOT Center Celebrates 20 Years



*Current DOT TOT child, Valerie Tiche, celebrates 20-year anniversary milestone.*

The Department of Transportation (DOT) TOT Child Care Center, a nonprofit organization providing priority enrollment to children of Caltrans employees, celebrated its 20-year anniversary this summer.

Shelley Wells – first enrollee of the day care center and daughter of Caltrans employees, David and Susan Wells – was among the attendees at the celebration.

In July 1980, the Caltrans Women's Council recognized a critical shortage of day care services for children of state employees in down-

town Sacramento, and they set out to do something about it.

Six women serving as DOT TOT's founders and early board members – Judith MacBrine, Joy Doyle, Hely Jones, Peggy Crawford, Suzanne Holmes and Florence (Smith) Santos – had a vision and a commitment for success.

In the 20-year celebration, MacBrine and Doyle were presented with special plaques recognizing their inspiration and dedication to the Center. Under their leadership, many volunteers participated in fundraisers, accumulating more than \$7,000 to open the facility.

The location of the Center, originally targeted for the Transportation Lab property at 57<sup>th</sup> and Folsom Boulevard, was reconsidered due to parental accessibility concerns.

Legislative support for the proposed center resulted in awarding the organization its present 4,000 square foot facility, previously used as a construction trailer for the Capitol Restoration Project. The trailer is now at 12<sup>th</sup> & Q Streets, near Caltrans Headquarters.

By spring 1982, by-laws had been completed, the DOT TOT Center was incorporated and Caltrans architects and engineers began to convert the existing facility into a day care center.

In June 1983, the board finalized policies, developed a budget, hired the director and assistant director and com-



*Judith MacBrine, Joy Doyle and Peggy Crawford, three of DOT TOT's founders, celebrate 20 years following a successful vision.*

pleted the paper work needed to obtain child care licenses for both infant and preschool-age children.

The Department of Personnel Administration awarded a grant for \$28,000 in 1987, allowing the Center to enhance its educational and developmental programs.

Today, the Center operates at full capacity meeting the needs of 24 infants and toddlers and 36 pre-school children. The organization continues to be operated by a volunteer parent Board of Directors and funding comes solely from tuition and fundraisers.

The Center prides itself in high quality care in stable, pleasant surroundings, with a focus on the children and the staff. "The DOT TOT Center is a special place that people really fall in love with," said MacBrine.

The success of the Center over the years has been attributed, in large part, to the staff. Four of the dedicated staff have been there for more than 15 years and one teacher has been there for two decades. "DOT TOT has the best teachers in the child care industry. If you ask the parents why they enroll their children at DOT TOT, they'll tell you it's the teachers," said Treasurer Dara Wheeler.

Each year during the holiday season you can find the children of DOT TOT singing carols in a presentation at the Director's Office. This tradition began with the children singing to former Caltrans Director Leo Trombatore in appreciation for his support of the Center.

For more information on enrollment you can call (916) 442-5421.



*DOT TOT staff person, Liz Anderson, who has been with the organization since inception, poses between two former DOT TOT students, Ashley Walters and Shelley Wells.*



## Caltrans Celebrates Disability Awareness Month

In honor of Disability Awareness Month - October - the Department Disability Advisory Committees (DACs) will be holding informational events on understanding disabilities.

Mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, DACs advise and assist the Department in promoting and facilitating a barrier-free environment for employees of all abilities, including those with disabilities. This includes individuals who wear glasses.

The ADA focuses on the needs of individuals with disabilities in such areas as education, training, employment and access.

Some of the departmental activities planned during the month include division wheelchair races, a "reality" room and sensitivity training. Other events

incorporate a diabetes presentation, a California School for the Blind student jazz ensemble, an appearance by the U.S. Secretary of Labor and events to raise scholarship funds to assist disabled students. All employees are encouraged to participate in these activities.

Also in honor of Disability Awareness Month, the CT News announced that all issues of the CT News will be provided automatically in a user-friendly alternative format for the visually impaired.

"The recent change to the newsletter allows me to read it like sighted employees but with the added benefit of not having to navigate a web page," said Mits Ogata. "I enjoyed reading it and look forward to the next edition."

Director Jeff Morales praised the action. "This achievement demonstrates the Department's ongoing commitment to finding ways that improve the environment for both our disabled employees and the public," he said.

A detailed list of activities taking place in the Department during Disability Awareness Month can be found at <http://onramp.dot.ca.gov/eo/>.

To learn more about creating a better workplace for all employees, contact the Department's ADA Coordinator, Michelle Adams, (916) 324-0987 or Co-Chairs of the Caltrans and Sacramento DACs: Ted Clark, (916) 324-0964; TTY, (916) 324-2252; and Bob Nitschke, (916) 227-9660.

### Caltrans Heroes

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last to exit the vehicle. "As I tried to get out of my seatbelt, the water was over my head," she said. Once out and on top of the vehicle, she slowly dropped into the water. However, the current quickly pinned her against the undercarriage and began to pull her to the rear of the pickup. Payne immediately broke from the chain and scooped her to safety.

Young Natalie was the final victim to escape, and just in time. The tiny teenager said, "Once I saw my grandma was out, I pulled myself out and jumped off the truck towards a Caltrans worker when I looked back, I saw the truck roll over."

At the conclusion of this life-changing event for the victims, the two heroic maintenance workers faithfully returned to "storm patrol," seeking new opportunities to lend a helping hand.

The heroic effort won high praise from Caltrans Director Jeff Morales. "We're extremely proud of the quick and heroic actions of these employees," said Morales. "There is no higher calling than for a person to risk his or her own life to save another's, and that's what these men have done."



*Governor Davis presents Medals of Valor to Caltrans District 8 employees, Terry Gillich (left) and Gary Ratliff (above), in an award ceremony last month.*

The California Transportation Foundation (CTF) also recognized the significance of this event. The CTF provided travel expenses for the two men and their families to attend the award ceremony. It voted to provide \$440 so that Ratliff's wife and sons could attend, and \$195 to allow Mrs. Gillich to travel to Sacramento.

The CTF provides grants to organizations and individuals within California for awards and recognition of outstanding performance. It also funds scholarships and career days, assists employees and their family members in times of need, provides memorials to honor deceased employees, stages public events recognizing transportation excellence, and co-sponsors seminars, conferences, research projects and studies. Most of the beneficiaries of these activities are Caltrans employees.

## Announcement of New, Non-Engineering Management Award

If Universal Pictures had run across Emerson Rhyner before they talked to Gregory Peck, Rhyner probably would have had the part of Atticus Finch in the film, "To Kill a Mockingbird."

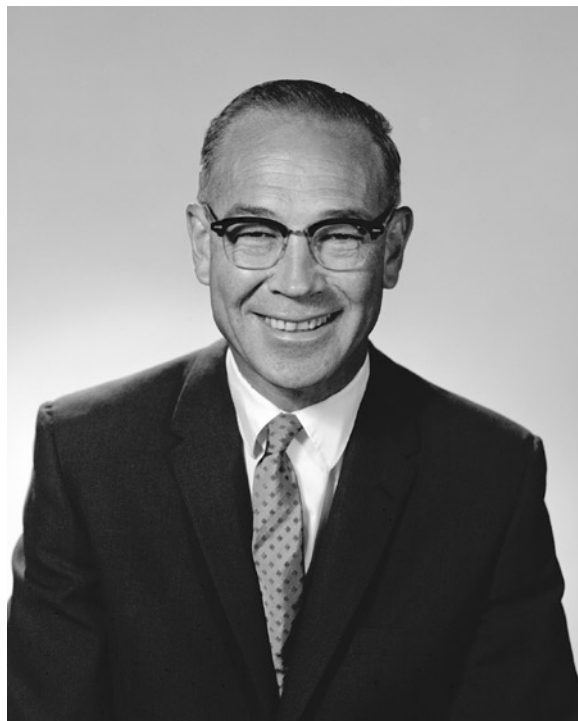
Rhyner, who in 1953 joined the Department of Public Works, Division of Contracts and Right of Way (precursor of Caltrans' current Legal Division), had that kind of presence. He served the Division, and then the Department of Transportation, for more than 30 years, eventually becoming its contact with the State Legislature and drafting much of the legislation that today guides the Department in its day-to-day operations.

He was an imposing presence, respected both in the halls of the Legislature and in the wings of the Governor's Office for his legal and legislative acumen.

Now, the California Department of Transportation and the California Transportation Foundation (CTF) are announcing a new, non-engineering manager award to be presented in Rhyner's name, first at the Tranny Banquet in May 2004, and annually thereafter.

"The award will be conferred on managers who exhibit the kinds of skills that made 'Em' Rhyner one of the most respected legal minds in Caltrans' history. He had long-range planning skills and an ability to envision change and welcome it – key factors in the transition from the Division of Highways to the Department of Transportation," said Heinz Heckerroth, Executive Secretary of the Foundation.

After receiving a law degree from Southwestern University in Los Angeles and serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II,



*New, non-engineering management award now available in honor of distinguished former Caltrans employee, Emerson Rhyner.*

Rhyner was appointed as Glendale Deputy City Attorney. His legislative work brought him to the State Capitol where he met and was recruited by Bob Reed - the Division of Highway's Chief of Contracts and Right of Way. He was to become the Department's voice in transportation law in Washington and at the State Capitol.

Rhyner helped define the relationship between state highway departments and national interests. He was instrumental in establishing state and local government roles in the early days of freeway development in California. His fascination with the legislative process allowed him to work easily with the politicians and lawmakers of the day.

"Loyalty and teamwork were important to Em," said his co-worker of 20 years, Tom Carroll. "He was a man who loved what he did and had very progressive views. He could formulate a concept over lunch and send a workable plan to the Governor's Office

later in the day."

This month, the CTF will begin soliciting donations to fund the new Rhyner Award as well as the James Roberts Structure Engineering Award, inaugurated in 2002. CTF provides grants for awards and recognition, professional development, hardship assistance, and memorials, including naming of transportation facilities authorized by the Legislature. It also co-sponsors transportation seminars, conferences, research projects and studies.

Those wishing to donate to the Foundation or learn more about CTF/Caltrans sponsored awards may access the Caltrans Awards Web site at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/awards>.

### Heritage

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their freedom in the month of September. These struggles generated a rich and diverse Hispanic Heritage.

Today, there are 20 Hispanic countries and three territories between the Rio Grande and Tierra del Fuego. Descendants of those nations have contributed greatly to the Department at all levels and classifications. In the past few years, the Department has increased its number of represented employees from different ethnic and social groups in classifications across the board.

As Secretary Contreras-Sweet said during the program, "We have diversity in our staff: black, white, brown, yellow and green yes, we grow environmentalists on our staff."

The event concluded with a delicious Hispanic Heritage luncheon served in the Capitol's basement cafeteria.

## REMINDER

**Excellence in Transportation 2004 entries are due November 6, 2003.**

**Access the Caltrans Awards Web site at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/awards> for a copy of the guidelines and an application.**



**EXCELLENCE**  
IN TRANSPORTATION

## Ribbon Cutting on Adobe Road Interchange

Caltrans District 2 and the Tehama County Transportation Commission celebrated the completion of the new Adobe Road Interchange in a ribbon cutting ceremony in August.

Construction on this \$7.6 million project began in September 2001. Many state and local officials, and members of the Red Bluff community, were on hand to cut the ribbon.

The interchange, which opened to travelers immediately following the event, replaces a single overcrossing, just north of the Sacramento River on Interstate 5 (I-5).

The project was fully funded by Tehama County State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds.

This portion of I-5 was constructed in 1965 as part of a con-



*District 2 Director Brian Crane and City of Red Bluff Mayor Tere Cherveny, along with many other local officials, cut the ceremonial ribbon marking the opening of the Adobe Road Interchange on Interstate 5.*

tinuing effort to develop an interstate system from Mexico to Canada. Today, I-5 has become the principal route between California and the Pacific Northwest, carrying more than 35,000 vehicles per day through Red Bluff. That figure is expected to be more than 50,000 by the year 2020.

The interchange provides convenient access to the expanding residential area to the east of the freeway. It also provides improved emergency access to residents living in northern Red Bluff.

The Adobe Road project is consistent with state and local transportation plans, fitting into both the City of Red Bluff's general plan and Tehama County's 20-year regional transportation plan.

## Exams Schedule

**The Caltrans Examination Office anticipates that the following examination bulletins will have a Final Filing date in October/November:**

Assistant Information Systems Analyst (Promo)  
Landscape Architect, Caltrans (Promo)  
Library Technical Assistant I (Promo)  
Warehouse Worker (Promo)  
Senior Transportation Electrical Engineer (Specialist) (Promo)  
Television Specialist (Promo)

**The following examinations allow for continuous filing:**

Associate Right of Way Agent (Promo)  
Caltrans Heavy Equipment Mechanic (Promo)  
Transportation Surveyor, Caltrans (Open)  
Transportation Surveyor -Party Chief, Caltrans (Open)

**The following examinations allow for continuous filing on the Internet:**

Senior Environmental Planner (Promo)  
Senior Right of Way Agent (Promo)  
Senior Transportation Engineer, Caltrans (Promo)

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<http://admin.dot.ca.gov/hr/recognition/index.shtml>